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RHODODENDRONS

THIS is the time of year when the rhododendrons are at the height of their bloom. Though most of the commonly called "azaleas" are classed as rhododendrons, still most of the gardening public think of rhododendrons merely as those large leaved plants which keep their leaves all winter. Botanically this is not correct, but the idea has come to be accepted by many through long usage. Now, most of the azaleas are about past bloom, except the flame azalea, *Rhododendron calendulaceum*. This will be followed a little later by the sweet azalea, *R. arborescens*, and in July by the swamp azalea, *R. viscosum*. The last two have very fragrant white flowers and are of particular value because of their late bloom.

During the past, many hybrid rhododendrons have been tried out under New England conditions. Several studies have been made of varieties which have successfully withstood the rigorous New England winters, but it can be said that only a comparatively few have proved satisfactory, and even these suffer during the most severe winters.

Bulletin readers who have raised hybrid rhododendrons for a period of years will probably be able to add certain plants to the list given below, but for those who have not, it would be best to adhere to the fifteen given here as having proved the most hardy over a long period of time. Undoubtedly, new ones will be added and there are peculiar situations where certain half-hardy types will grow well, but in general the following list includes the hardiest:

White

Boule de Neige

Album elegans

Album grandiflorum

Purple

Purpureum elegans

Purpureum grandiflorum

Everestianum (a pale purple, much lighter than either of the others)

Pink

Abraham Lincoln

Lady Armstrong

Henrietta Sargent

Mrs. C. S. Sargent

Roseum elegans

Red

Kettledrum

Atrosanguineum

H. W. Sargent

Caractacus

Added to this list of hybrid types are certain species which have been commonly planted for years.

R. carolinianum

R. catawbiense

R. catawbiense album

R. maximum

R. minus

R. Smirnowii (not much planted yet, but a very good type)

There might be mentioned a long list of rhododendrons which have been tried but been found slightly tender under New England conditions. For instance, the lovely *R. Fortunei* and its hybrids, though apparently doing well on Cape Cod, they have not proved satisfactory at the Arboretum. However, there is one plant, the "Duke of York," growing in the rhododendron collection at the Arboretum which is about 8 feet high and literally covered with blooms this year. It is apparently an exception to the rule, but is growing in a shaded, sheltered place at the base of Hemlock Hill. If moved to a more open situation, it undoubtedly would suffer some injury.

At the Arboretum, the length of bloom of the rhododendrons is rather long. This year, for instance, it started with *R. venustum* (one of the less hardy types) about May 5, followed closely by "Mont Blanc" and a few days later by "Boule de Neige" and "Charles Dickens," the last two being in full bloom by the end of May together with *R. carolinianum*. Then the majority of them burst into



A good hybrid, *Rhododendron* "*Album elegans*,"

bloom around the first to the middle of June to be followed at the end by the giant rosebay, *R. maximum*, which will bloom by the end of June. This is the tallest of all, but unfortunately blooms after the new leaves and shoots have started growth, so that its effect in flower is greatly decreased.

Notes. Volume iv of "Icones Plantarum Sinicarum," an important, beautifully illustrated folio work with descriptive text in English and Chinese, appeared this spring and was dedicated to Dr. E. D. Merrill, Acting Supervisor of the Arnold Arboretum, as an authority on the flora of Malaysia and "in recognition of his signal contributions to the knowledge of the flora of Hainan and Kwangtung." It is the work of Dr. H. H. Hu and Professor W. Y. Chun, both of whom received a part of their training at the Arnold Arboretum, and is published by the Fan Memorial Institute of Biology, Peiping, China.

Other volumes have been dedicated to Charles Sprague Sargent (vol. i, 1927), Augustine Henry (vol. ii, 1929), and Ludwig Diels, Director of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum (vol. iii, 1933).

Dr. Merrill has recently been honored by election as an honorary member to the Botanical Society of Japan, the oldest botanical society in Asia, organized in 1887 as the Tokyo Botanical Society.

The degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on Dr. E. D. Merrill on May 27, by the University of California at its 73rd Commencement. In introducing Dr. Merrill for the degree, President Sproul of the University of California, characterized him as "Dean of the College of Agriculture in the University of California for five years; one of America's most eminent botanists; distinguished authority on tropical flora; interpreter of plant geography in relation to man's food; able coordinator of agricultural and botanical research."

Color Photography. Friends of the Arboretum will be glad to know that a recent voluntary gift made by one of the supporters of the Arboretum has made possible a serious attempt to increase the collection of natural color slides owned by the Arboretum. It is possible, through the intelligent use of one of the color processes now available, to portray flower colors accurately on slides. The Arboretum should have the best collection in this country of natural colored slides of trees and shrubs, and this gift will aid materially in attaining this objective.

DONALD WYMAN